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Written Testimony of Christopher Phelps, Program Director  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee

Thursday, February 10, 2011

Written testimony regarding Proposed Senate Bill 200, An Act Establishing Geothermal  
Renewable Energy Credits.

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, Senator Witkos, Representative Hoydick, and  
members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony regarding SB 200. Environment  
Connecticut is a member-supported non-profit environmental advocacy organization. We are a  
part of the Environment America federation of state-based environment groups and advocate for  
policies to protect our air, water, and natural landscape.

Geothermal power has the potential to provide significant amounts of renewable energy for our  
nation. In California, geothermal power plants provide almost 5% of the state's electric power. In  
addition, many thousands of homes and businesses across the nation use geothermal heat pumps  
for heating and cooling. Geothermal energy, both for heating and cooling, as well as for electric  
generation, can play a big role in moving our nation off of oil and creating a cleaner, homegrown  
renewable energy future.

To the extent that geothermal electric generation is a promising renewable electric generation  
resource, we support inclusion of this technology as a Class I renewable electric generation  
resource in policies such as the Connecticut Renewable Portfolio Standard. As such, we would  
support the addition of geothermal electric power in the Connecticut Class I RPS definition as  
appears to be suggested in lines 5 & 6 of the bill.

However, I wish to point out to the committee that the language of SB 200 refers to geothermal  
energy more broadly and that it would be inappropriate to provide renewable electricity  
incentives for geothermal applications that are not electricity-producing. Geothermal heating and  
cooling technologies are more effectively supported through other policy mechanisms than  
through renewable electricity standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony regarding SB 200.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps  
Program Director  
Environment Connecticut